

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TUNIS 09128 241216Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02  
SS-15 USIA-06 /069 W  
-----010430 241221Z /15

R 241100Z DEC 77  
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9362  
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY TRWPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 9128

E.O.11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR TS  
SUBJ: BELKHODJA DISMISSED AS MINISTER OF INTERIOR,  
DEFENSE MINISTER FARHAT ASSUMES PORTFOLIO AD INTERIM.

1. IN UNEXPECTED MOVE, TAHAR BELKHODJA WAS REMOVED FROM HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS MINISTER OF INTERIOR AFTERNOON OF DEC 23, AND DEFESED MINISTER ABDALLAH FARHAT WAS NAMED AS SUCCESSOR AD INTERIM. AT SAME TIME, BELKHODHA LIEUTENANT ABDELMAJID BOUSLAMA WAS DROPPED AS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF SURETE BEING REPLACED BY MEMBER OF FARHAT'S STAFF AT DEFENSE MINISTRY, CO . ZIN EL ABIDINE BEN ALI.

2. CHANGES WERE ANNOUNCED BY GOT PRESS AGENCY TAP AROUND 1:30 PM DEC 23, WITH STATEMENT THAT PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA HAD "ENDED FUNCTIONS" OF BELKHODJA AS INTERIOR MINISTER, AND THAT ON BOURGUIBA'S INSTRUCTIONS, NOUIRALHAD SWORN IN FARHAT AS INERIOR MINISTER "AD INERIM". CEREMONY TOOK PLACE AT 12:00 PM, IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING 11 AM NOUIRA-BOURGUIBA MEETING AT PRESEDENTIAL PALACE IN CARTHAGE. AT SAME TIME IT WAS ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT BELKHODJA "WILL BE CALLED TO OTHER FUNCTIONS," WHICH MEANS HE WAS FIRED.  
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THIS TOOK PLACE AT TIME BELKHODJA IS OUT OF COUNTRY ON PRIVATE VISIT TO NICE, FRANCE, WHERE HIS DAUGHTER IS IN SCHOOL.

3. AT THIS EARLY STAGE, IT IS DIFFICULT TO SAY EXACTLY WHAT HAS HAPPENED EXCEPT THAT BEKHODJA IS CLEARLY "OUT". IT HAS BEEN KNOWN FOR SOME TIME THAT BEKHODJA

HAS SUPPORTED GENERALLY MODERATE LINE IN DEALING WITH RECENT WAVE OF STIKES AND CIVIL DISTURBANCES, WHILE NOUIRA, SUPPORTED BY FARHAT AND PARTY DIRECTOR SAYAH, HAVE FAVORED HARDER POSITIONS. BELKHODJA OVER PAST YEAR HAS BUILT UP REPUTATION AS SOMETHING OF A LIBERAL AND AS PEACEMAKER BETWEEN UGTT AND GOVERNMENT, AND THIS MODERATION MAY HAVE BEEN ONE OF PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR HIS REMOVAL. ANOTHER RELATED FACTOR MAY HAVE BEEN BELKHODJA'S RISING POPULARITY AND HIS POTENTIALITY AS A RIVAL FOR NOUIRA.

4. IT IS KNOWN THAT FARHAT ENJOYS THE CONFIDENCE OF BOURGUIBA, AND THAT HE ALSO SEES EYE TO EYE WITH NOUIRA ON NEED TO KEEP PUBLIC ORDER. COL BEN ALI HAS REPUTATION OF BEING GOOD SOLDIER WHO FOLLOWS ORDERS. HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO COOPERATE FULLY WITH HIS OLD BOSS. MULCAHY

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** BELKHODJA DISMISSED AS MINISTER OF INTERIOR, DEFENSE MINISTER FARHAT ASSUMES PORTFOLIO AD INTERIM.  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PDIP, TS  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
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